(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Space Programme is being executed in a cost effective manner and the cost hardly is one third or one fifth of the international standards;

(b) whether it is also a fact that India is the only country using the sophisticated technology for the benefit of common man; and

(c) what were the indirect benefits derived from Indian Space Programmes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Especially, the development cost of Indian Launch Vehicles (PSLV and GSLV) is about one-third the development cost of corresponding launch vehicles abroad.

(b) India is in a leading position in application of Space technology for the benefit of common man such as identifying zones which could yield ground water for drinking; suitable locations for recharging water; advisories on potential fishing zones for the fishermen; estimating crop areas and yields; assessing deforestation; mapping urban areas for planning purposes; identifying waste lands for development, monitoring the natural resources and environment; cyclone prediction and warning; mapping of flood and cyclone affected areas for planning the relief measures; tele-medicine services to extend specialized medical care for rural/remote areas; tele-education; training and developmental communication and emergency communication systems for disaster management.

(c) The indirect benefits derived from Indian Space Programme include development of Indian Industrial capability for space products and services; application of space technology for commercial exploitation by Indian Industries through technology transfer; creation of critical manpower in strategic technology areas; growth in ground segment industry; human resource development in academic institutions/universities for undertaking space research; International co-operation and enhancing the scientific and technological capability of the country.

Cost and time overruns in central projects

1915. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the status report of 742 central projects in a spectrum of sectors from Railways to Atomic energy shows that 216 projects show cost over-runs and another 269 have time over-runs;

(b) whether it is also a fact that staggering 66 per cent jump in expenditure is the price of this delay; and

(c) if so, whether Government have made any investigations to find out the reasons for the delay and the action proposed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI G.K. VASAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As on 1st April, 2006, out of 742 projects, 76 projects with original cost of Rs. 39811.57 crore and anticipated cost of Rs. 71,008.87 crore, had both time and cost overrun. For these projects, time overrun varied from 1 month to 252 months, and cost overrun was 78.36% of the original cost.

(c) The reasons for delay include financial constraints, delay in land acquisition and rehabilitation, delay in award of contracts, delay in equipment supply, slow progress of construction by the contractors, delay in environment and other clearances, law and order, geological surprises in the case of mining and hydro-electric power projects, etc. The actions taken to ensure timely completion of these projects are as follows:

(i) adoption of two-stage clearance system and stricter appraisal of projects before investment approval;

(ii) taking up of projects for implementation only after funds have been fully tied up;

(iii) in-depth review of projects on monthly and quarterly basis by the Government;

(iv) follow up with the State Governments in respect of problems relating to land acquisition, rehabilitation related issues, forest clearances, infrastructure facilities, law and order at project sites, etc.

(v) inter-ministerial coordination for resolving unresolved problems; and

(vi) appointment of nodal officers for each project with continuity of tenure.

Modernising the statistical system

1916. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state: